المجلس الإسلامي
Islamic Council

3 February 1992

The Rt Hon John Major, MP
Prime Minister
10 Downing Street
London SW1

Dear Prime Minister,

The Islamic Council learnt with great interest of your intention to send representatives to China to survey the human rights situation there.

May I respectfully request you to generalise this most important initiative and to consider sending a similar mission to inquire into the abysmal record of President Mubarak's regime in Egypt on human rights.

Since President Mubarak came to power he has ruled continuously under emergency laws, and over the last decade thousands, whose only 'crime' has been to express their opinions, have been arrested and persecuted, some shot and others killed under torture, by the Egyptian security forces. They are frequently arrested and jailed without trial. When their cases eventually come before a court they are often released, due to lack of evidence against them, whereupon they are immediately re-arrested outside the courtrooms. Such is the respect for judges, courts or the rule of law. To give but one recent example, in October 1991 more than 200 people were arrested in connexion with their criticism of the peace talks in Madrid. Many are held in administrative detention (without charge or trial), and incommunicado.

Torture is well documented and has frequently been the subject of Amnesty International reports, for example 'Egypt, Ten years of torture',which was published in 1991 and their most recent published in January 1992 entitled 'Egypt, Security police detentions undermine the rule of law'.

President Mubarak would be unable to ignore an interest shown in this situation by the Prime Minister of a country renowned for its democratic principles and respect for the rights of the individual and we hope that you will follow up your initiative concerning human rights in China with a similar approach to Egypt.

With best wishes,
Yours sincerely,

Salem Azzam

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Secretary General

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From the Private Secretary

17 February 1992

Dear Mr Azzam,

Thank you for your letter of 3 February to the Prime Minister about human rights in Egypt. I have been asked to reply.

We take very seriously any reports of human rights abuses, wherever they occur. Our Embassy in Cairo has established a good relationship with the Egyptian Organisation for Human Rights and with most of the individuals who are active in the human rights field. We are ready to take up specific issues and cases with the Egyptian authorities where we have well-documented evidence to support allegations of human rights abuses.

You mentioned the Prime Minister's decision to send representatives to investigate the human rights situation in China. Each case is different. In the case of Egypt we have been able to maintain a useful dialogue with the relevant authorities.

Yours sincerely,

Stephen Wall

J.S. Wall

Mr Salem Azzam